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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 LONDON 013048

DEPARTMENT FOR AF/E, NEA/ENA
PARIS FOR MORAN

E.O. 12356: DECL: 9/15/25
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PGOV](#) [PTER](#) [EAID](#) [SU](#) [IQ](#) [IZ](#)
SUBJECT: LEADER OF SUDANESE OPPOSITION SEEKS USG SUPPORT

11. CONFIDENTIAL - ENTIRE TEXT.

12. SUMMARY: LEADER OF THE SUDANESE OPPOSITION COALITION, AL-SAYED EL-MERGHANI, TOLD US SEPTEMBER 15 THAT OPPOSITION EFFORTS WILL PRODUCE THE DOWNFALL OF THE NATIONAL ISLAMIC FRONT (NIF) REGIME IN KHARTOUM.

-- TO FURTHER THIS EFFORT, EL-MERGHANI ASKED THE USG TO "ENCOURAGE" REGIONAL LEADERS TO LEND SUPPORT TO SUDANESE OPPOSITION GROUPS. WE RESPONDED THAT THE U.S. WOULD NOT INTERFERE WITH INTERNAL MATTERS IN SUDAN, BUT AGREED TO PASS ON HIS REQUEST. PLEASE NOTE ACTION REQUEST, PARAGRAPH 11.

-- REGARDING TERRORIST ACTIVITY, EL-MERGHANI SAID HE IS SURE THE NOTORIOUS BIN LADEN REMAINS IN SUDAN. HE ACCUSED THE GOS OF COMPLICITY IN THE ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT ON PRESIDENT MUBARAK.

-- EL-MERGHANI NOTED EVIDENCE OF SUPPORT FROM BOTH IRAN AND IRAQ FOR THE NIF, CITING NIF LEADER TURABI'S PARTICULARLY CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH SADDAM HUSSEIN. END SUMMARY.

13. AFRICA WATCHER MET IN LONDON ON SEPTEMBER 15 WITH LEADER OF THE SUDANESE DEMOCRATIC UNIONIST PARTY (DUP) AND HEAD OF THE COUNTRY'S OPPOSITION COALITION, AL-SAYED MOHAMED OSMAN EL-MERGHANI. ALTHOUGH EL-MERGHANI SPEAKS SOME ENGLISH, HE USUALLY SPOKE IN ARABIC, WHICH HIS AIDE, A. HADI (A SECURITY CONSULTANT BASED IN THE BRITISH MIDLANDS), TRANSLATED. MERGHANI WORE CEREMONIAL BLACK ROBES AND A TURBAN.

OPPOSITION GOALS

14. EL-MERGHANI NOTED THAT THE DUP HAD JUST COMPLETED THE LONDON MEETING OF ITS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE THAT DAY. THE PARTY HAD RESOLVED THAT, IN THE ABSENCE OF SUPPORT FROM THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY, THE DUP WILL BEGIN TO LOBBY SUDANESE IN EXILE FOR SUPPORT. IN PARTICULAR, EL-MERGHANI SAID, THE OPPOSITION IS SEEKING TO ESTABLISH A RADIO STATION. AT THE SAME TIME, OPPOSITIONISTS WILL SEEK SUPPORT FROM DISGRUNTLED MEMBERS OF THE SUDANESE MILITARY. IN ADDITION TO GENERAL FATIH AHMED ALI, SOME COMMANDERS IN BORDER AREAS ARE SYMPATHETIC TO THE OPPOSITION.

15. ASKED FOR HIS PROGNOSIS, EL-MERGHANI SAID HE BELIEVED SUDAN WILL AVOID SOMALIA'S FATE, AND THAT THE SUDANESE PEOPLE WILL "TOPPLE" THE NIF REGIME. BUT THE GOS WILL NEVER FALL ON ITS OWN. THE CURRENT SPATE OF DEMONSTRATIONS ARE THE FIRST HINT OF THAT KIND OF EFFORT. YET FOREIGN AFFAIRS SECRETARY EL-SADDIN HAS SAID THAT IF THE GOS FALLS, HE WILL MAKE THE COUNTRY UNGOVERNABLE, EL-MERGHANI TOLD US. AND IF THE GOVERNMENT FALLS AND THE OPPOSITION COMES TO POWER, EL-MERGHANI BELIEVES SIXTH-COLUMNISTS FROM THE NIF WILL

POSE A SERIOUS DANGER TO ITS STABILITY, ALONG WITH
TERRORISTS WHOM THE NIF REGIME HAS SUPPORTED.

REQUEST FOR USG SUPPORT

¶16. EL-MERGHANI SAID THE SUDANESE OPPOSITION DID NOT WANT INTERVENTION FROM THE U.S. OR NEIGHBORING STATES, BUT HOPED FOR SUPPORT. IN PARTICULAR, HE ASKED THE U.S. TO "ENCOURAGE" NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES -- HE MENTIONED EGYPT, SAUDI ARABIA AND THE GULF STATES IN PARTICULAR -- TO LEND SUPPORT TO THE OPPOSITION. FOR IF THE OPPOSITION DOES NOT SUCCEED IN OVERTHROWING THE NIF REGIME, EL-MERGHANI ARGUED, THE AREA WILL REMAIN UNSTABLE. IN RESPONSE, WE SAID THE U.S. WILL NOT INTERVENE IN, NOR INTERFERE WITH THE INTERNAL AFFAIRS OF, SUDAN. WE WOULD CONTINUE TO PRESS FOR GREATER RESPECT FOR HUMAN RIGHTS, AND TO SEEK A REGIONAL SOLUTION TO INSTABILITY IN THE REGION. THAT SAID, WE AGREED TO CONVEY EL-MERGHANI'S REQUEST BACK TO WASHINGTON.

GOS SUPPORT FOR TERRORISM

¶17. ASKED ABOUT KHARTOUM'S SUPPORT FOR TERRORISM, EL-MERGHANI REPLIED THAT THE LOWEST LEVEL OF GOS SUPPORT FOR TERRORISM IS ITS OPERATION OF VARIOUS ISLAMIC "SALVATION GROUPS." MANY OF THE MID-LEVEL MANAGERS OF THESE GROUPS ARE EITHER SAUDI ARABIAN OR LIBYAN, THOUGH MOST OF THE FIELD WORKERS ARE ACTUALLY PALESTINIAN. IN ADDITION, MANY APPARENTLY PRIVATE FIRMS IN SUDAN ARE ACTUALLY FUND-RAISING FRONTS FOR TERRORISTS, MOSTLY USED FOR ACQUIRING WEAPONS, HE ADDED. THE NOTORIOUS OSAMA BIN LADIN REMAINS IN KHARTOUM, EL-MERGHANI MAINTAINED. HE NOTED THAT A REPRESENTATIVE OF AN IRANIAN-FUNDED ISLAMIC FRONT GROUP, A SAUDI CITIZEN NAMED (FNU) MASSARI, IS CURRENTLY IN THE UK UNDER BIN LADIN'S DIRECTION; HE SAID HE HAD TOLD HMG OF THIS.

RELATIONS WITH EGYPT, IGADD

¶18. ASKED ABOUT THE MUBARAK ASSASSINATION ATTEMPT, EL-MERGHANI ACCUSED THE GOS OF INVOLVEMENT IN IT, ADDING HE BELIEVED IT WOULD CAUSE A SHAKE UP IN EGYPTIAN SECURITY. IN HIS VIEW, MANY ISLAMIC FUNDAMENTALISTS HAD INFILTRATED THE EGYPTIAN GOVERNMENT, INCLUDING ITS SECURITY APPARATUS. HE BLAMED LACK OF SAUDI SUPPORT ON SIMILAR INFILTRATION BY ISLAMISTS. HADI, EL-MERGHANI'S ASSISTANT, LATER ADDED THAT THE EGYPTIAN FOREIGN MINISTER'S SUDANESE DESK RECENTLY UNDERWENT A PERSONNEL UPHEAVAL AS A RESULT OF GOE SECURITY MEASURES, RESULTING IN IMPROVED COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN CAIRO AND THE SUDANESE OPPOSITION. EL-MERGHANI ALSO APPLAUDED EGYPT'S REDUCTION OF DIPLOMATIC PRESENCE IN SUDAN. ASKED ABOUT PROSPECTS FOR IGADD BROKERING A REGIONAL SETTLEMENT, EL-MERGHANI CALLED THE NIF REGIME "EVIL" AND INCAPABLE OF AGREEING TO PEACE.

TURABI AND ISLAMISM

¶19. AT THE CENTER OF THE NIF REGIME IS TURABI, EL-MERGHANI CONTINUED, WHO HAS CLOSE TIES TO IRAN AND IRAQ. THE NIF RECEIVES MANY DONATIONS FROM IRANIAN FRONT ORGANIZATIONS, PARTICULARLY THE WRETCHED OF THE EARTH, MANY OF WHICH EARN LARGE AMOUNTS OF MONEY THROUGH THEIR OPERATION OF HOTELS IN TEHRAN. THESE ORGANIZATIONS HAVE RECENTLY BEGUN TO ANNOUNCE "A GREAT LEAP," WHICH EL-MERGHANI BELIEVES MUST REFER TO PLANNED ATTACKS ON FOREIGN GOVERNMENTS AND THEIR OFFICIALS.

¶10. TURABI HAS LONG HAD A CLOSE ASSOCIATION WITH SADDAM

HUSSEIN, EL-MERGHANI SAID. TURABI URGED SADDAM TO INVAD KUWAIT, AND ADVISED SADDAM TO INVOKE THE KORAN DURING THE GULF WAR AND AFTER. MORE RECENTLY, EL-MERGHANI SAID HE HAD HEARD FROM "EYE-WITNESSES" THAT TURABI HAS SAID THAT MUBARAK AND SAUDI ARABIAN KING FAHD "MUST GO." TURABI HAS ALSO DEVELOPED CLOSE CONTACT WITH ISLAMISTS IN QATAR. EL-MERGHANI SAID HE BELIEVES TURABI PLANNED A SERIES OF ISLAMIST COUPS THROUGHOUT THE GULF REGION, THAT WOULD EVENTUALLY BRING HIM ENORMOUS POWER BEHIND THE SCENES. FOR THIS REASON, EL-MERGHANI CONCLUDED, HE BELIEVES THAT TURABI HAS BECOME MEGALOMANIACAL. IN CLOSING, HE ASKED TO MEET AMBASSADOR CARNEY EITHER IN LONDON OR CAIRO AT SOME MUTUALLY AGREEABLE TIME, AND TO RECOMMEND A CONTACT AT EMBASSY CAIRO.

COMMENT AND ACTION REQUEST

11. EL-MERGHANI IS A SERIOUS INTERLOCUTOR, THOUGH IT MAY BE DIFFICULT TO SUBSTANTIATE ALL HIS VIEWS. WE BELIEVE WE SHOULD REPLY TO HIS REQUEST FOR USG ENCOURAGEMENT OF NEIGHBORING STATES IN HIS CAUSE'S BEHALF. WHILE WE BELIEVE THE USG CANNOT OFFER SUCH ENCOURAGEMENT, WE COULD OFFER TO KEEP IN CLOSE TOUCH INSTEAD, PROBABLY IN CAIRO (WHERE HE SPENDS MOST OF THE YEAR). ACTION REQUEST: PLEASE PROVIDE GUIDANCE TO REPLY TO EL-MERGHANI'S REQUEST. NOTE: EL-MERGHANI WILL REMAIN IN LONDON UNTIL LATE SEPTEMBER; AFRICA WATCHER CAN CONVEY USG RESPONSE VIA EL-MERGHANI'S AIDE.

DEAL